

Cabot Trails Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2023

Present: Dana Glazier, Kris Schmitt, Gary Gulka, Michael Socks, Paul Wade, Monique Gerbex, Chuck Talbert, Lori Augustyniak, Chris Porter, Russell Statman, Sonia Scherr, Dudley Voigt

Next Meeting: **October 18**

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of August 16 approved without changes.

Discussion with VAST – Trail and Bridge Damage

Chris Porter, facilities manager and contractor working for Headwaters Restaurant & Pub, described the work being done to repair and replace the VAST bridge behind the hardware store and restaurant that crosses the Winooski River. Two 72-foot steel beams have been acquired for the bridge, permit approvals are in process, and a plan is in place to reconstruct the bridge. Part of the cost will be paid by the owner of Headwaters Restaurant, Russell Statman, and VAST will provide the wooden bridge decking. The plan is to complete the work within a few weeks.

Matt Tetreault, VAST Trails Administrator, was not able to make the meeting but provided a written update of the damage to the VAST trail in Cabot and the plans for making repairs. The Lower Cabot loop will not be repaired this year, however, the VAST bridge behind the Willey Building will be repaired. This will allow us to work on and open the Old Center Trail.

Public Comment

Dudley Voigt said that she is in support of the proposed route through the Voigt property. Chuck described the new proposed route which would stay mostly outside the fencing of the pasture in the woods and require 50-60 feet of existing fencing to be moved 10-12 feet. The trail would cut across a small portion of Charlie Pilbin's property (he has agreed) and eventually cross a ditch onto West Hill Pond Rd. **Chuck will schedule a site visit next week for interested Trails Committee members.**

Cabot School community service opportunities for Students

Gary said we have a volunteer service agreement for trail stewards, but he feels it does not fit for high school student community service. Since there are a few town government organizations that have student volunteers, there should be a consistent policy regarding this. Sonia explained that students have 100 hours of required community service for graduation. This service requirement can be met in several ways. A staff member can accompany students to an off-campus community service project, and the school has medical liability insurance coverage for this. Students can participate in non-school sponsored community service. In this case, students are not covered by medical liability insurance. Background checks would be required for off-campus school sponsored community service where an outside individual, like a community resident, is overseeing the volunteer work. If the student is working with an outside sponsor, but the project is not school sponsored, then background checks would not be required, even if the student is able to count the work towards community service. It was

agreed that **Gary will discuss this with a Select Board member in detail to see if there is interest in a unified, consistent policy.** Vicky Abare of Vermont League of Cities and Towns recommended that an agreement be in place with the school with language which indemnifies the Town for their role in the student's community service work. The Town should be added as an additional insured on the school's policy. Written parental permission with specified duties listed should also be obtained.

Administrative Matters

Volunteer hours for the month:

Kris – 4

Dana – 7

Chuck – 11

Monique – 5

Paul - 2

Gary – 12

Michael – 3

Budget for the year starting July 1 is \$2000. We received a Flood Recovery Grant for \$500 so our total budget is \$2500. There have been some minor expenditures since the beginning of fiscal year but not recorded yet. We have a quote on the signs for the Old Center Trail - \$10 each for dogs on leash and stay on trail; \$15 for no hunting sign.

Assessment of Trail Conditions

Paul spoke with Jonah Bourne about trail damage on Langone Rd. Jonah thinks if a small excavator is rented, the road could be repaired for \$2000. Paul will check excavator rental costs. We do not have adequate funds in budget to cover this expense. **It was agreed that we will conduct a site visit with Jonah to discuss further. Also discussed was the need to prioritize the site damage on trails in the network.**

There is damage on the VAST trail on the Agudelo property and trail and culvert going up to the Talbert sugar house. This will need to be repaired by VAST. Chuck has received landowner permission from Agudelo, so this trail has the necessary permissions.

Town Forest – the damage beyond the parking area is manageable with a workday, maybe three or four people.

Trail rerouting on Mitchell Property – Chuck will contact the Mitchell's. The stream that was diverting water on the trail (running parallel to the VAST trail) was re-routed back into the streambed with shovels and hand work.

Chuck would like to re-open the Talbert Farm Trail. Some temporary re-routing is necessary in the pasture.

Chuck suggested we start putting bike routes on backroads into our trail network given that several of our trails in the network are closed.

Trail Updates and Review Work Plan/Timeline

Grant Related

Landowner appreciation – Dana, Lori, and Gary will meet. We will review Dana’s proposal that was shared months ago. We are targeting landowner appreciation in November.

We are in the process of requesting a one-year grant extension from VT Dept. of Forests, Parks, & Recreation. We hope to send in a request sometime in October or November.

Grant Project Team meeting – we are targeting November.

Langone and Eister Trails – still need to do gpx files for the trail routes.

Benches – Paul needs to complete design and plans.

Old Center Trail – need to confirm with VAST that the bridge above the Willey Building will be repaired this year.

Burt Orchard Trail – Materials have been received and we are targeting November 1 starting date.

Non-Grant Related

The LVRT Regional Amenities scoping study will be presented by the consultant on Oct. 11 in Hardwick. The intent is to use the results of this scoping study to apply for future LVRT grants offered through VTrans. **Gary will send out information on the meeting.**

Exploring connector trails in Town Forest – on hold until next year.

Trail Maps and Apps

Gary estimates that we can post our trails to Trail Finder in two months.

Public Outreach/Social Media

We will be getting a guide from Bryce which is almost complete. Lori will review and then send on the Committee.

New Business

None